

REMARKS

By this Amendment, Applicant cancels claim 51, without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter therein, and amends claims 46 and 52-54. Claims 1-50 and 52-55 are therefore pending.

In the Office Action of July 16, 2004,¹ claims 1-50 and 55 were allowed; claims 51-53 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over JP 07231883 A (“*Matsue*”) in view of JP 63006461 A (“*Kanekawa*”); and claim 54 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but was indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form with the base and intervening claim recitations. Applicant acknowledges, with appreciation, the Examiner’s indication of allowable subject matter and submits that this Amendment places the application, *prima facie*, in condition for allowance, as discussed below.

Claim 54 is rewritten in independent form including the features of base claim 51. Because claim 54 is now in the form the Examiner indicated as allowable, Applicant requests withdrawal of the objection and the timely allowance of this pending claim.

The rejection of claim 51 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is rendered moot by the cancellation of that claim. The rejection of claims 52 and 53 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) should be withdrawn at least because these claims, as currently presented, depend from allowable claim 54. Moreover, the features of claims 52 and 53 are not rendered obvious by *Matsue* in view of *Kanekawa*. Applicant therefore requests withdrawal of the rejection of claims 52 and 53 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and the timely allowance of these pending claims.

¹ The Office Action contains a number of statements reflecting characterizations of the related art and the claims. Regardless of whether any such statement is identified herein, Applicant declines to automatically subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action.

Applicant amends claim 46 to correct a minor informality and not for reasons related to patentability. Claim 46, as currently presented, remains in condition for allowance.

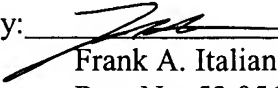
With each of the pending claims in condition for allowance, Applicant requests reconsideration of the application and the timely issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW,
GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.

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By: 
Frank A. Italiano
Reg. No. 53,056